THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Task Force submitted Action Plan-I on 30th April, 2003 giving the outline of the time schedules for the completion of the feasibility studies, detailed project reports, estimated cost, implementation schedule, concrete benefits and advantages of the project etc. Action Plan-II was submitted on 16.4.2004. The important issues such as appraisal of individual projects in respect of economic viability, socio-economic impacts, environmental impacts and preparation of resettlement plans; suitable mechanism for bringing about speedy consensus amongst the States; prioritization of the different project components for preparation of Detailed Project Reports and implementation; suitable organizational structure for implementing the project; various modalities for project funding; international dimensions that may be involved in some project components and cost recovery have been discussed in Action Plan II.

(c) The Task Force has held 14 meetings in all.

Revenue Collections

*117. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have, for the first time, been able to make revenue collections for fiscal 2003-04 which have exceeded budget estimates since 1995-96;

(b) if so, what was the total provisional figure for fiscal ending 31st March, 2004 and to what extent it has been more than budget estimates;

(c) what are the main reasons therefor; and

(d) what further steps are being considered to collect more revenue in future?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The provisional total direct and indirect tax revenue collections for the 2003-04 financial year is Rs. 2,52,612 Crore as against the Budget

Estimates of Rs. 2,49,855 Crore. The actual collections (provisional) for 2003-04 financial year is Rs. 2,757 Crore (1.1%) more as compared to Budget Estimates.

(c) The main reasons for exceeding the Budget Estimates include general improvement in the market conditions and growth in the GDP, higher Corporation Tax collections, growth in the manufacturing and trading sector, buoyant capital market and improvements in the tax administration.

(d) The steps being taken to enhance revenue collections include widening the tax base, phasing out of exemptions wherever possible, strengthening tax administration, plugging leakage of revenue, recovery of tax arrears through a multi-pronged drive and simplification of tax procedures to improve compliance.

Airbus service between Kolkata and Agartala

*118. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of CIVILAVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that for want of Airbus or Boeing aircrafts in the morning between Kolkata and Agartala, the national newspapers cannot reach the readers in the evening;

(b) whether it is a fact that ATR aircraft plying in the morning at present cannot carry the bundles of papers and cannot withstand the load of baggages and luggages; and

(c) whether an Airbus or a Boeing would be operated between Agartala and Kolkata in the morning very shortly to solve the above problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVILAVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The matter has been brought to the notice of the government. However, there are 26 flights every week on Kolkata-Agartala sector, which is sufficient to meet the present demand.

Funds for Centrally-sponsored Schemes

†*119. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are formulating a scheme to provide funds for the Centrally sponsored schemes directly to Panchayats in future; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.